
PROGRAM DESIGN AND ACTIVITIES



Section PD

STANDARDS FOR CAMP ACCREDITATION

Program is the heart of camp—where camp philosophy and objectives are implemented in a sustained experience that provides a creative, recreational, and educational opportunity in the camp environment. Camp programming utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper's mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth.

The Program standards allow the flexibility for each camp to take advantage of its own unique programming strengths and determine its own procedures, while still addressing areas of program planning, analysis, and delivery. The standards in this section are general standards for common camp activities. Defining specific standards for all potential and unique program activities is both impossible and impractical. However, three basic concepts need to be at the core of any activity offered in camp:

- Qualified supervision of the activity,
- Sound guidelines, safety regulations, and emergency procedures for conduct of the activity,
- Provision and maintenance of acceptable facilities and equipment.

APPLICABILITY

All camps must score Standards PD-1 through PD-5 for general program operation. All camps with day, resident, and short-term residential programs must also score Standards PD-6 through PD-14.

All camps, including trip/travel camps, which include any specialized program activities as a part of the program, must also score the appropriate standards as follows:

- Camps with specialized program activities under camp staff supervision (both in and out of camp) score Standards PD-15 through PD-27. This requirement includes camps that provide specialized staff and equipment for user groups.
- Camps using staffed public facilities or providers at any time for specialized program activities score Standards PD-19 through PD-29.
- Camps that have their own specialized program activities *AND* use staffed public facilities for some activities score Standards PD-15 through PD-29.
- If user groups provide their own leaders or equipment for specialized program activities, Standards PD-15 through PD-29 are not scored. However, user groups should be advised of any requirements or conditions for use (see Standard PD-5). Camps should consider the requirements of the specialized activity standards when establishing guidelines for user groups.

Foundational Practices

Standards that were initially examples of best practices in the industry have become so accepted that they are considered foundational practices. Some have also been adopted as regulations and laws by local, state, and national bodies. These practices continue to be important to the delivery of a positive camp experience. It is assumed that they are in practice, as applicable, in every camp. The annual review of these foundational practices is scored in Standard OM-1.

Foundational practices related to Program Design include:

- Contracts with program providers
- Balance in camper activities
- Camper participation in program planning
- Fostering an understanding of differences between individuals and group cooperation
- Freedom to practice religion



PD-1 OVERNIGHTS AND TRIPS

Does the camp require training for campers and staff, based on written procedures, for overnights, trips, and excursions that require:

PD-1A: Persons using camp stoves or flammable liquids be instructed in their proper use and care and supervised until competency is demonstrated? YES NO

PD-1B: All drinking water be obtained from tested or approved water supplies or be boiled, filtered, or chemically treated, as appropriate? YES NO

PD-1C: Food be prepared and stored under safe and sanitary conditions, with particular care given to maintaining potentially hazardous foods at proper temperatures? YES NO

PD-1D: Food utensils be cleaned and sanitized after each use and protected from contamination between use? YES NO

PD-1E: Applicable procedures be followed to minimize environmental impact on campsites or natural areas? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Requirements and training are applicable to day camp, resident camp (including trip/travel programs), and short-term programs run by the camp. Procedures and training for Standard PD-1A should specify steps for proper camp stove use and any restrictions on participant use of stoves or flammable fuels.

The intent of Standard PD-1B is to address questionable water supplies, not those which have been tested by public authorities for residential or public use. Water from natural bodies of water or springs should be treated if no assurance exists that the supply has been approved for human consumption. The camp should use appropriate water purification methods, based on advice from local officials able to identify possible contaminants for that area or specific water supply.

With regard to Standard PD-1C, a definition of “potentially hazardous foods” is provided in the Interpretation sub-section of Standard SF-20. In Standard PD-1D, “food utensils” include dishes, cups, eating utensils, and food-preparation utensils not heated, at least to boiling, in the cooking process.

In Standard PD-1E, procedures for conducting overnights or trips to natural areas should include at least appropriate group-size limits, recommendations for use of biodegradable products, and proper disposal of refuse and human

MANDATORY (PD-1A)

Does not apply if overnights, trips, or excursions are never taken in day, resident, or short-term camp programs.

PD-1A does not apply when camp stoves or flammable liquids are not used.

PD-1B does not apply only if all drinking water is provided from the camp's approved water supply or by a public drinking water supply.

PD-1C does not apply when food is not stored or prepared by the group.

PD-1D does not apply when disposable food utensils are used exclusively or if food utensils are not carried by the group.

PD-1E does not apply when campsites or natural areas are not used for overnights or trips.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

waste. The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on environmental policies and resources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written procedures; director/staff description of training and implementation.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED



PD-2 OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

Does the campsite have natural resources and outdoor-recreation options that are used to enrich an outdoor-living experience? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: A foundational principle of ACA is to promote the utilization of the natural world to help campers grow and appreciate their surroundings. This standard requires the intentional use of the outdoors as a program environment for education and inspiration. Natural areas for outdoor programs, located either on the site or in close proximity to the site, must be available and utilized on a regular basis.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of natural resources or recreation areas; director/staff description of use.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PD-3 ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

Has the camp evaluated the environmental impact of its activities and programs, and implemented procedures to minimize any detrimental effects? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: The intent of this standard is that camps model appropriate practices and behaviors that are sensitive to the environmental concerns of our planet. Camps need to think through all activities and programs to determine any possible damage or impact to the environment. With activities such as mountain biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, use of motorized vehicles, motor boating, etc., efforts should be made to eliminate not only physical damage, but also visual and noise impact on the camp and other affected areas. Camps also need to be aware of the fact that even low-impact activities, such as walking in the woods on a regular basis can impact the natural environment.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on environmental policies and resources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of evaluation process and resulting procedures; visitor observation of practices.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PD-4 PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

Does the camp implement a system that requires camp program equipment be:

PD-4A: Regularly checked for safety, maintained in good repair, and stored in a manner to safeguard effectiveness? YES NO

PD-4B: Appropriate to the size and ability of the user? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: “Program equipment” includes all equipment utilized to carry out both general and specialized program activities, such as archery, sports, outdoor living skills, crafts, backpacking, or other specialized activities.

Camps should establish procedures concerning how often equipment is checked and by whom. Storage locations should be dry and provide protection from weather, rodents, etc. Appropriate equipment storage should be determined by consulting with authoritative sources. In this regard, the ACA website, www.acacamps.org, should be consulted for a list of commonly used authoritative sources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of procedures used; visitor observation of selected program equipment as stored and used.



PD-5 USER GROUPS—CONDITIONS

Does the camp have written evidence that user groups are advised of any conditions for use, safety guidelines, supervision requirements, warnings, or restrictions for program activities, equipment, and facilities available to them? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: “Written evidence” includes signs, trail markers, posted regulations or restrictions, and written materials provided to user groups, as appropriate. For some activities, such as hiking or tennis, which are generally considered part of participants’ common experience, addressing factors such as hours for use and precautions may be sufficient. Other activities such as horseback riding, cross-country skiing, or tobogganing may require more specific information or warnings about trail difficulty or hazardous conditions.

“Conditions for use” may include such matters as the use of participant waivers, permission forms, and expectations for behavior or proper use of equipment. Camps should specify ratios and type of supervisors required for certain activities or facilities, such as the requirement of adult supervisors for youth in recreation facilities.

If the camp allows user groups to utilize specialized activity facilities or equipment (e.g., archery equipment or ropes course elements) without camp staff leadership, supervisory requirements and conditions for use should at least be consistent with those specified in the standards for camp use. Restrictions or conditions specified may be combined with written requirements for Standard OM-19.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on permission forms and waivers.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written or posted information; director explanation of system utilized to inform user groups.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Does not apply if the camp never serves user groups or never provides program equipment or facilities for user groups.

Applies to:
• **User-group programs**

CAMPS WITH DAY, RESIDENT (INCLUDING TRIP/TRAVEL PROGRAMS),
AND SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

If a camp *NEVER* provides day, resident, or short-term residential programs, Standards PD-6 through PD-14 *DO NOT APPLY*.



PD-6 CAMP GOALS AND OUTCOMES

To help to provide a quality camp experience has the camp:

PD-6A: Established a written statement of overall goals for participants?
YES NO

PD-6B: Identified, in writing, specific observable behavioral outcomes that address the developmental needs of campers?
YES NO

PD-6C: Provided materials and training strategies for staff to help campers achieve established outcomes in the camp program?
YES NO

PD-6D: Informed parents and campers of the goals of the camp experience?
YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Goals express the purpose of the camp's operation. For some camps, their goals and expected outcomes may be articulated in their mission statement. From these broad goals, the camp can determine specific outcomes that are desired as a result of participating in the camp activities and experiences. If goals of a national organization are used, they must relate to desired outcomes for the specific camp and clientele. Outcomes for short-term programs may be different than those for a day or extended-stay resident camp.

Outcomes are measured or observed changes in the behavior of the campers. For example, changes may be seen in a camper's relationship to other campers or a camper's willingness to assume responsibility. Changes may also be observed in attitudes or in values, as expressed by a person's choices or use of language. Behavioral changes may be observed at camp and even later observed by the parent of the camper.

Outcomes are the indicators or observable evidence of the achievement of a goal. For example, if the goal is "to develop the decision-making skills needed to succeed in a constantly changing world," a desired outcome might be "campers practice making individual and group decisions." Some indicators of meeting this outcome include that campers are able to choose the appropriate clothes to wear without help and that staff observe individuals participating in the planning for their cookout.

Parents and campers should be informed of the goals of the camp. Sharing information concerning the nature of the outcomes is also encouraged so parents and campers may more easily evaluate the effect of the camp experience. This communication can be accomplished through the promotion and registration materials, as well as by specific correspondence with parents and other adults working with the campers. In the case of religious or agency

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

camps, it may be helpful to communicate the camp goals and expected outcomes to religious leaders and agency staff who will follow up with the camper after the camp experience.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on program goals and outcomes.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written goals and expected outcomes and of schedules and materials used in training staff in this area; visitor observation of promotional pieces or specific communication to parents and campers regarding goals and outcomes; director/staff description of goals and outcomes desired.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED



PD-7 CAMP EXPERIENCE EVALUATION

To improve the quality of the camp experience, does the camp have written evidence of multiple sources of feedback on the accomplishment of the established outcomes related to all aspects of program and operation? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Through a number of methodologies, the system of evaluation addressed in this standard should seek feedback from campers, parents, and other stakeholders on both their satisfaction with the camp experience and evidence of achievement of the goals through observable outcomes. A camp can employ a number of ways to measure the achievement of outcomes, for example:

- Observing and recording behavioral changes
- Staff meetings
- Camper and parent written evaluations (related to all aspects of camp – program, administration, facilities, food service, staff, etc.)
- Conversations with campers/counselors/parents
- Camper council
- Focus groups
- Telephone interviews
- On-line feedback
- Written surveys

While any one of the aforementioned sources of feedback could help provide guidance to improve a particular aspect of camp, the use of multiple sources will create the most accurate assessment of the overall experience and will enhance the achievement of established outcomes. “Written evidence” is documentation that the processes are being implemented (for example, date of focus groups, schedule defining camper council activity, staff meeting agendas) and does not refer to the documentation of the content of the feedback sessions. It is important for the camp to receive feedback on its operational management issues (e.g., quality of food, cleanliness of the facilities, efficiency of registration process) given their potential impact on both program quality and the achievement of behavioral outcomes for the camper.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on measuring outcomes using multiple data sources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written evidence of different methods in practice to evaluate outcomes; director/staff description of evaluation processes.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

PD-8 PROGRAM VARIETY

Does the camp offer multiple program activities that implement camp goals and provide campers the opportunity to experience progression, challenge, and success?

YES NO

Does not apply to short-term residential programs.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps

INTERPRETATION: The intent of this standard is that each camper experience a variety of activities that provide the opportunity for progression, challenge, and success. This requirement may involve a natural progression that comes with practice and guidance, such as swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, or archery. It may also include activities that are made available as levels or abilities (e.g., "the 12-year olds get to go on an overnight trip," "campers who succeed on the climbing wall can climb the rock face the next time.").

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director explanation or visitor observation of program activities.



PD-9 CAMPER INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM PLANNING

Does the camp encourage the involvement of campers in the Program Design through the following practices:

PD-9A: The camp program is flexible, as evidenced by the willingness to modify its schedule, and by its encouraging spontaneous activities? YES NO

PD-9B: The camp provides intentional opportunities for campers to practice decision-making in program and group-living activities? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: For Standard PD-9A, staff must be trained to respond to “teachable moments” and to modify schedules both for weather and other unforeseen situations, as well as to take advantage of a learning opportunity for the campers. Staff need to know the level of freedom and boundaries for spontaneous activities.

For Standard PD-9B, staff must be trained to help campers make developmentally appropriate choices in their activities and daily-living experiences. Programs need to be structured to offer opportunities for campers to make decisions, appropriate to the camper’s capabilities and to the activity.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of training for staff, of opportunities for spontaneous programming, and camper decision-making.

Does not apply to short-term residential programs.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps



PD-10 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Does the camp program provide specific activities that are designed to help campers develop socially? YES NO

Does not apply to short-term residential programs.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps

INTERPRETATION: The camp community provides an exceptional opportunity for growth in social awareness and skills for campers. To be effective, the camp must identify social growth as a goal and foster specific activities or experiences to provide the greatest opportunity for age-appropriate social development to take place. Staff must be trained to lead the activities, and be aware of the observable outcomes that indicate that campers are increasing in social development.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of training for staff; description of opportunities for social growth to take place in the programs and living experiences.



PD-11 ACTIVITY INFORMATION AND PERMISSION

Does the camp have a process to inform campers and their parents or guardians of the nature of anticipated camp activities and to gather signed permission from parents or guardians for minors participating in those activities? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Consent for minors to participate should be based on an informed understanding of the activities in which the camper will be participating. Camps may publish information about typical activities in a brochure or in a pre-camp packet, for example. Activities that are not generally familiar to parents, such as rock climbing or rafting, should be noted in written or verbal information about the camp, before permission to participate is gathered. For short-term programs, activities may be listed or described on a flyer or communicated in a meeting with parents prior to the camp trip.

When program activities are away from the campsite, camps may wish to notify parents of certain relevant matters, such as the type and frequency of communication with the camp. If activities offered are under the supervision of someone else (e.g., swimming at the county pool where the county's guards are in charge, or use of another camp's ropes course), such a change in supervision should be noted.

Informing campers and parents, and gathering signed permission provides protection to the camp in situations where the parent might say, "If I had known that, I would not have allowed my child to participate." Though not required by the standard, gathering the camper's signature may also serve as notification of the nature of camp activities and the camper's responsibility to follow safety guidelines and procedures.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on permission forms.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director description of process: visitor observation of randomly selected signed permission forms.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

PD-12 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Does the camp include, in each age group served in day and resident camp programs, structured activities that:

- Help campers feel comfortable in the natural environment,
 - Build appreciation for and knowledge of ecological principles, and
 - Develop an awareness of and responsibility for practices that have minimal impact on the environment?
- YES NO

Does not apply to short-term residential programs.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps

INTERPRETATION: The staff should be aware of ways to help new and less-experienced campers feel comfortable, in control, and secure in their new environment. Each age group should have opportunities to learn about the natural world and practice responsible behavior, such as recycling, water conservation, appropriate use of firewood, use of biodegradable soaps and other products, appropriate waste disposal, proper trail use, environmental education activities, etc.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on environmental policies and resources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of practices and programs; visitor observation of practices and programs.

PD-13 EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Does not apply if out-of-camp activities never occur.

Does not apply to trips of three nights or more which must be scored in the PT section.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

Does the camp implement a policy that specifies when the leader of out-of-camp activities must possess emergency information for each member of the group, that includes:

- Copy of health history,
 - Insurance information, if available, and
 - Signed permission-to-treat forms or a signed religious waiver exempting the participant from medical treatment?
- YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Out-of-camp activities include trips to museums, ball games, overnight sites, staffed public facilities, etc., when groups are away from the resources of the camp for a period of time. Overnight camping trips of two nights or less are scored in this standard. Longer trips (i.e., three nights or more) are scored in the PT section. This standard does not require that emergency information must always be with out-of-camp groups on short trips. It does, however, require the camp to have a policy indicating when such records are to be with the group.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff description of policy and implementation.

PD-14 DETAILS AND DESIGNATED PERSON

Does the camp require the following details for out-of-camp activities be planned in advance and made known to a designated person remaining in the main camp:

- Roster of participants,
- Departure and return times,
- Inclement weather plans,
- Route to be taken, and
- Plans for communications with the designated person in the main camp?

YES NO

INTERPRETATION: "Roster of participants" may be a complete list or a previously identified group (e.g., patrol, cabin, unit, etc.), with any exceptions noted. "Plans for communications" should identify the times and means of contact that are planned in advance and made known to all parties. This requirement should be coordinated with the communication plan established in Standard OM-15.

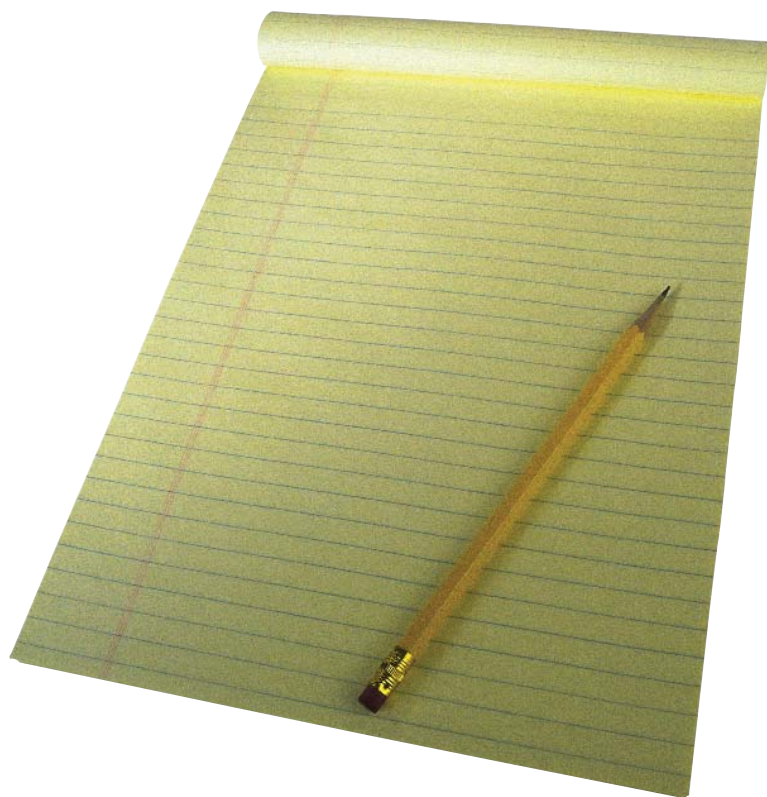
COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of procedures and implementation.

Does not apply if out-of-camp activities never occur.

Does not apply to trips of three nights or more, which must be scored in the PT section.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs



SPECIALIZED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

(Note: Aquatics, adventure/challenge, and horseback riding are scored in separate sections.)

This subsection of the Program Design and Activities section applies to any specialized program activity offered by the camp for campers, staff, or user groups, whether on camp property, at public sites or facilities, or on the property or facilities of another camp, when the program activity meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The activity utilizes equipment, animals, or tools whose use by campers requires supervision by a person skilled in their use (e.g., archery, bicycles, all-terrain vehicles, go-karts, gymnastics, power tools, model rocketry, lacrosse, and shooting sports).
- The activity involves camper use of fire (e.g., building fires for cookouts), or camper use of heat-producing equipment or substances (e.g., wood-burning tools or kilns).
- The activity requires injury-protection equipment (e.g., helmets, goggles, or padding) as used in endeavors such as wrestling or fencing.

add paintball

A camp that offers multiple programs that meet these criteria (e.g., bicycling and gymnastics) must meet the standards for *EACH* of those specialized activities. Noncompliance in *ANY* activity under a particular standard results in a "NO" score for the standard, even if other activities comply.

The standards involving specialized program activities are scored for activities conducted or arranged by the camp for campers and staff, or for user groups for whom the camp is providing staff leadership and equipment. If user groups are providing their own leaders or equipment for specialized program activities, these standards are not scored. However, user groups should be advised of any requirements or conditions for circumstances when they utilize their own leadership or equipment. (See Standard PD-5.) Camps should consider the requirements for specialized program activities when establishing guidelines for user groups.

Standards PD-15 through PD-18 are applicable to all camps that provide specialized program activities for campers, staff, or groups. As such, camp staff are responsible for the activities and equipment. If camps use only staffed public facilities or providers, and specialized activities are never conducted or arranged by the camp, Standards PD-15 through PD-18 *DO NOT APPLY*.

PD-15 SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

Does the camp provide an overall supervisor for each type of specialized activity who is an adult with certification or documented training and experience in that type of activity? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: The intent of this standard is that there be at least one person in camp who is certified/documented/experienced in each of the activities offered, who is helping supervise the conduct of each identified activity. This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision, and procedures for the activity. This supervisor should provide training and supervision to enable specialized-activity leaders to carry out their responsibilities but does not necessarily need to be present at each activity. Documentation of training must be available for each type of activity if more than one is identified (e.g., archery and riflery).

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for the Specialized Program Activity Checklist.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written documentation of certification or training and experience for each type of specialized activity offered.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PD-16 STAFF SKILL VERIFICATION

Does the camp have written evidence that the skills of each staff member to teach or assist in specialized program activities are verified and evaluated by the camp prior to leading activities? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: It is the camp's responsibility to verify the skills of those staff working with specialized program activities, based on recommendations of authoritative sources. Staff should be evaluated prior to leading any specialized activities. The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on staff skill verification.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written documentation of skills evaluation; director/staff explanation of the process.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PD-17 SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITY LEADERS

Does the camp have documentation of regular observations by supervisors to verify that specialized activity leaders:

- Enforce established safety regulations,
- Provide appropriate instruction to participants,
- Identify and manage environmental and other hazards related to the activity, and
- Apply appropriate emergency procedures related to the activity and the participants?

YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: A critical factor in a camp's level of effectiveness is its staff. An essential determinant of staff effectiveness is appropriate training, in addition to supervision, reinforcement, coaching, correcting, and instruction, as needed. The intent of this standard is that supervisors document observations of leaders conducting program activities with participants. Such documentation may include checklists, copies of performance evaluations, or notes taken by supervisors. "Regular observations" refers to scrutinizing the behavior and actions of specialized activity leaders on a schedule determined by the camp, based on factors such as the complexity of the program, length of season, and background of instructors.

This standard differs from Standard HR-20 in that this requirement specifically covers the documented observation of staff members who are leading program activities with participants. Standard HR-20 deals with the general supervision of camper/staff interaction and does not require documentation.

"Supervisors" of specialized-activity leaders may have different titles, such as activity specialists, head instructors, activity coordinators, etc. On the other hand, the supervision may be provided by a program director or camp director who has appropriate qualifications. These individuals are responsible for training and overseeing individual activity leaders or assistants.

"Established safety regulations" may include general camp safety regulations, as indicated in Standard OM-8, or those regulations that are established for a specific activity or area. "Appropriate instruction" refers to the fact that the teaching is tailored to the age, ability level, and special needs of participants. "Environmental hazards" may include those circumstances involving weather, terrain, or other natural conditions, such as animals, poisonous plants, etc.

In some situations, however, supervisors may not have an opportunity to observe staff responding to actual emergencies. Regardless, activity leaders need to be oriented to common health concerns associated with that activity, for example, preventing and treating burns if they are leading a fire-building activity. All activity leaders must fully understand how to get help when needed.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on the supervision of activity leaders.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of documentation of observation; visitor observation of randomly selected activities.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED



PD-18 SUPERVISION OF SPECIALIZED ACTIVITY AREAS

Does the camp have a policy in practice that controls access to all specialized-activity areas, except when a group is actively supervised by a qualified adult activity leader? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: Access to specialized equipment and areas should be limited to persons under the supervision of qualified activity leaders. This provision applies to both camper and staff use of equipment and areas. "Actively supervised" means that the qualified adult is present and monitoring the activity. "Qualified" refers to the fact that, at a minimum, the activity leader meets the requirements of Standards PD-16 and PD-17. The levels of qualification may vary due to the age of participants and content of the activity. Procedures to limit access may involve such factors as scheduling, posted regulations, physical barriers, locked areas, and equipment, as appropriate.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff and camper explanation of staff coverage and access control; visitor observation of activities.



ALL SPECIALIZED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN AND OUT OF CAMP

Standards PD-19 through PD-29 are applicable to all specialized program activities, including those provided or staffed by the camp *AND* those conducted at staffed public facilities. Accordingly, all camps score Standards PD-19 through PD-29.



PD-19 OPERATING PROCEDURES

Does the camp implement written operating procedures for each type of specialized activity, based on information from authoritative sources, that include at least:

- Eligibility requirements for participation,
- Camper/staff supervision ratios,
- Identification of appropriate protective equipment,
- Safety regulations, and
- Emergency procedures?

And, when the camp is conducting the activity,

- Equipment maintenance procedures, and
- Identification of safety concerns related to the use area? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: The intent of this standard is that for each of the applicable activities, ratios, safety regulations, and emergency procedures—specific to the locations, participants, and program characteristics—be established. When a camp utilizes staffed public facilities or providers, operating procedures may involve a combination of those procedures from the facility or vendor and those of the camp. For example, ratios may be established that include staff from the public facility. Furthermore, safety regulations and emergency procedures may identify some regulations from the camp for behavior management, boundaries, or emergency communication, while referencing the facility's established safety regulations for the activity.

At a minimum, "equipment maintenance procedures" should designate persons responsible for maintenance, frequency of checks, and expectations concerning equipment storage. "Safety concerns of the use area" refers to maintaining the use area free from observable hazards, employing impact-absorbing materials in key locations, etc.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on operating procedures.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written operating procedures for each of the identified activities.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PD-20 SAFETY ORIENTATION

Does the camp require that the staff provide participants with a safety orientation, based on written procedures, before engaging in specialized program activities? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: The safety orientation should include safety rules and regulations, proper use of protective equipment, safety signals and practices to be used as appropriate, and necessary information on the characteristics and boundaries of the area. When using staffed public facilities or providers, the camp may supplement the safety orientation of the facility with specific safety regulations for campers. The safety orientation should be consistent with the operating procedures for any activity (see Standard PD-19). All rules should be covered in every orientation. "Written procedures" may be a posted sign, a checklist, or a bulleted list of items used by staff in an oral orientation.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Staff/camper description of safety orientation; visitor observation of written procedures for safety orientation.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PD-21 COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATION

Does the camp require that participants using equipment or vehicles be strictly monitored until competency is demonstrated? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Due to the possible dangers involved in the misuse of equipment or vehicles, staff should monitor campers carefully while they are learning how to use these items. Staff members (from the camp or from the public facility) should provide coaching, practice, and modeling while the campers are engaged in the learning process. This provision may include monitoring the skills of spotters for gymnastics, checking the ability of drivers to control go-karts, properly wearing appropriate safety gear, etc.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff description of procedures.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PD-22 ARCHERY SAFETY

Does the camp require the following for all archery activities:

PD-22A: Archery range design that includes:

- Arrow stop(s), and a supplementary backstop or specific safety zone behind the targets,
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers, known to the entire camp population, and
- Clearly defined shooting line(s)?

YES NO

PD-22B: Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity at the firing line and during the retrieval of arrows? YES NO

Does not apply if archery activities are never provided.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: Establishing safety buffers and zones around the archery range is critical to the safe operation of the activity. All persons who may be close to the area for any reason must be aware of and oriented to the safety zones and boundaries. To help in this regard, camps may use posted signs or warnings, physical barriers, or specific scheduling procedures to control access.

Safety signals and range commands are the specific directives and instructions utilized to assure the orderly and safe operation of the range. All participants must learn and follow commands to demonstrate proper respect for the potential danger involved with the unsafe use of archery equipment.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on design and activity management recommendations on archery.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of activities; staff and camper description of procedures used.



PD-23 ADDITIONAL FIREARM SAFETY

MANDATORY (PD-23A)

Does the camp require the following for all firearm activities:

PD-23A: When not in use, all firearms are stored in a locked cabinet or closet, within a locked room or inaccessible area for redundant safety; and all ammunition is stored in either a third location or container, requiring a separate key or access system?

YES NO

PD-23B: Shooting range design that includes:

- A bullet trap or a supplementary backstop and specific safety zone behind the targets,
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers, known to the entire camp population,
- Clearly defined firing line,
- *A plan for dealing with spent lead bullets consistent with applicable local environmental regulations

YES NO

PD-23C: Clear safety signals and range commands to control both the activity at the firing line and during the retrieval of targets?

YES NO

INTERPRETATION: *This standard applies to all program activities that use firearms and air/pellet guns. "Redundant safety" for firearms can also be met by utilizing gun locks on each rifle or locking each one up within the gun safe. Establishing safety buffers and zones around the shooting range is critical to safe operation of the activity. All persons who may be close to the area for any reason must be aware of and oriented to the safety zones and boundaries. Camps may use posted signs or warnings, physical barriers, or specific scheduling procedures to control access.

Safety signals and range commands are the specific directives and instructions utilized to assure the orderly and safe operation of the range. Participants must learn and follow commands to demonstrate proper respect for the potential danger involved with the unsafe use of firearms. Although retrieval of targets is not a part of paintball activities, the expectation is that safety signals and range commands will be used to safely control the activity.

*For additional information regarding spent lead bullets, visit: www.ACAcamps.org/accreditation; select "Resources/Tools."

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: *Visitor observation of activities; director/staff description of shooting range design and plan for dealing with spent lead bullets; staff and camper description of safety procedures used.

Does not apply if firearm (e.g., rifle, pistol, or shotgun) activities are never provided.

***PD-23 does not apply to paintball.**

Applies to:

- **Day camps**
- **Resident camps**
- **Short-term resident programs**
- **User-group programs**

PD-24 PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR

**MANDATORY
(ALL)**

PD 24A

Does not apply if bicycling activities are never provided.

PD 24B

Does not apply if motorized vehicle activities are never provided.

***Does not apply to golf carts.**

Applies to:

- **Day camps**
- **Resident camps**
- **Short-term resident programs**
- **User-group programs**

Does the camp require that helmets be worn by all participants (staff and campers) when engaged in:

PD-24A: Activities involving bicycling? YES NO

PD-24B: Activities involving any kind of motorized vehicle? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: PD-24A requires helmets to be worn in any program activity that involves bicycling on any surface provided by the camp, the camper, or a vendor. This standard does not apply to riding four-wheeled pedal bikes. If bicycle riding occurs outside of a program activity, helmets are not required to be worn, but all riders are encouraged to wear helmets as a way to model good safety practices. Standard PD-24B includes any program activity involving motorized vehicles such as motorcycles, motor bikes, go-karts, ATVs, etc.

Helmets should be appropriately sized and designed specifically for the activity being conducted, given that helmet construction standards vary for different activities. Helmets may be supplied by the camp or by a staffed public facility or vendor.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of activities; staff and camper description of helmets required.

PD-25 GO-KART SAFETY

Does not apply if go-karts are never used.

Applies to:

- **Day camps**
- **Resident camps**
- **Short-term resident programs**
- **User-group programs**

Does the camp require that go-karts be equipped with roll bars and restraint devices?

YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Camp go-karts, as well as go-karts at public facilities, must be properly equipped. Such equipment should include the required roll bars and appropriate restraint devices, such as seat belts, harnesses, and restraining bars.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of go-karts; director/staff description of policy's implementation.

PD-26 ATV SAFETY

Does the camp have required policies concerning the use of ATVs that include:

- ATVs operated by persons under the age of 16 are equipped with engines smaller than 90cc and steps have been taken to control the speed capability of these vehicles,
- No passengers are allowed, and
- ATVs are not operated on paved or public roads? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Camps that choose to utilize ATVs in their programming endeavors (in camp or at a public facility) should be familiar with safety studies and should strictly adhere to the recommendations of manufacturers and safety groups, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, concerning ATV safety. Restrictions in the size and power of ATVs are required because young campers generally do not have the physical size and coordination essential for safely operating such vehicles, according to manufacturers. In addition, young campers may not have the experience and judgment necessary to operate a motorized vehicle.

While three-wheeled ATVs are no longer manufactured, a few still exist and are in use. However, the use of three-wheeled ATVs is widely banned by almost all organizations and groups that work with youth. In fact, many youth organizations prohibit the use of any ATVs (including four-wheeled ATVs) by their participants.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of ATVs in use; director/staff description of use and procedures.

Does not apply if ATVs are never used.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs



PD-27 BOARDING AND SKATING SAFETY APPAREL

MANDATORY (PD-27A)

Does the camp require campers and staff in all boarding, in-line skating, and hockey activities to wear, at a minimum, the following safety gear:

PD-27A: Helmets?

YES NO

PD-27B: Knee and elbow pads?

YES NO

Does not apply if skateboarding, snowboarding, mountain boarding, in-line skating, or hockey are never provided.

PD-27B does not apply if snowboarding is the ONLY activity provided.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: The standard refers only to boarding activities that take place on land—skateboarding, snowboarding, mountain boarding, etc. It does not refer to wakeboarding. “Skating” includes any kind of activity on wheeled skates, such as roller blading and in-line skating. It does not include roller skating in an indoor rink. Hockey includes both roller hockey and ice hockey, but does not include field hockey or floor hockey.

Safety gear should be appropriately sized and designed specifically for the activity being conducted, given that construction standards for such equipment vary with different activities. Wrist guards and gloves are also recommended, although not required by the standard. Safety gear may be supplied by either the camp or the staffed public facility or provider.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of activities; staff/camper description of safety gear required.



PD-28 PUBLIC PROVIDER OF SPECIALIZED ACTIVITIES

Does the camp have a policy to select only provider(s) of specialized program activities who:

PD-28A: Provide an adequate number of instructors/leaders whose qualifications have been verified by the provider? YES NO

PD-28B: Utilize equipment that is appropriate in size and type and is in good repair? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Information about the facility's instructor qualifications, equipment, and operating procedures may be found in promotional materials or in the leasing/use agreement, or may be verified by personal observation and inquiry by a camp representative. Qualifications, ratios, and procedures for the public provider of specialized activities must be consistent with those recommended by appropriate authoritative sources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director description of policy and procedures used in selection.

Does not apply if the camp never uses staffed public facilities or providers for specialized program activities.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs



PD-29 CAMPER SUPERVISION OFF-SITE OR WITH PUBLIC PROVIDERS

Does the camp require staff who accompany campers to specialized activity facilities off-site or with public providers to be trained on written procedures that specify their supervisory roles and responsibilities?

YES NO

Does not apply if the camp never uses staffed public facilities or providers for specialized program activities.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

INTERPRETATION: When campers are at specialized activity facilities off-site or with public providers who bring instructors and equipment to the camp, staff must know their supervisory responsibilities. Their training should clarify responsibilities for such things as location of staff, camper behavior management, communication, and health-related matters. Responsibilities of staff will vary, depending on the location, type of activity, clientele, and staff provided by the facility or contracted service.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written procedures; director/staff explanation of training and supervision practice

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

